

UK Patent Application GB 2 169 737 A

(43) Application published 16 Jul 1986

(21) Application No 8600187

(22) Date of filing 6 Jan 1986

(30) Priority data

(31) 8500224

(32) 4 Jan 1985

(33) GB

(51) INT CL⁴
G07F 17/34

(52) Domestic classification (Edition H):

G4V 118 AA
U1S 1174 G4V

(56) Documents cited

GB A 2152262 GB A 2114347 GB A 2084371
GB A 2147442 GB A 2105891

(58) Field of search

G4V
Selected US specifications from IPC sub-classes G07F
A63F

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(54) Gaming machines

(57) A gaming machine offers a player a gamble on a number of alternatives, for example which of two cards displayed on a screen will be chosen. If the player is successful, the number of alternatives is increased or decreased normally by one, and the player can bet again, and so on, possibly up to a fixed limit of alternatives, as long as the player wins. This may be an extra feature of a machine, operational at random or when the player has been successful with a regular, main feature, such as achieving a winning hand on a poker machine.

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SPECIFICATION**Improvements relating to gaming machines**

5 This invention relates to gaming machines. It is primarily concerned with a gambling feature which can be made occasionally available to increase the interest and excitement in playing such a machine. Generally it will be supplementary to the main game which could, for example, be based on the game of poker.

According to the present invention there is provided a gaming machine with a gamble feature in which alternatives are offered on which 15 a player can bet, and in which, if such a bet is successful, the machine adds to or subtracts from the alternatives and gives the player a further opportunity to bet.

The addition of such alternatives and corresponding opportunities to bet may continue indefinitely as long as the player is successful, although normally a predetermined maximum win or maximum number of gambles will be imposed. With subtraction, there will be a 25 natural limit when the feature is down to two alternatives.

This gamble feature may become available at random or when a win has been achieved in the main game. For example, when a poker 30 hand of some value turns up, there may then be an opportunity to gamble the win.

The gamble feature in one preferred form may commence with two playing cards, electronically randomly selected, being simulated 35 on a video screen. They will either be of different colours (red and black) or both of the same colour. They will be alternately distinguished, as by enhanced illumination or an associated arrow, until one is selected. Previous 40 to this, the player will have bet on either 'red' or 'black', by pressing associated buttons. He may have to do this before the cards appear, in which case he has no guidance, or he may be allowed to decide after the cards are 45 shown. Then, if both cards are the same colour, provided he presses the correct button he will of course be assured of a gamble win.

If that gamble is successful then a further card will appear on the screen, and the process 50 is repeated. Again, a win is assured if the cards are still all the same colour. However, as cards are added and progressive gambles are taken, this becomes correspondingly less likely although there still be 55 more cards of one colour than the other, making selection of the preponderant colour the obvious choice for a successful gamble.

A limit may be imposed on the number of 60 gambles. For example, five cards could be the maximum. In that case there may be an additional prize if the hand that then shows is itself a poker hand with a combination of value such as a pair, three of a kind or a full house. This extra prize may be related in value 65 to that of the combination.

It will be understood that the initial gamble may be on more than two alternatives and that these alternatives may increase by more than one at each successful gamble.

70 It is also possible that, instead of progressively increasing the alternatives on which to gamble, they may be progressively decreased.

CLAIMS

75 1. A gaming machine with a gamble feature in which alternatives are offered on which a player can bet, and in which, if such a bet is successful, the machine adds to or subtracts from the alternatives and gives the player a further opportunity to bet.

2. A machine as claimed in Claim 1, wherein a limit is set on the number of further bets allowed.

3. A machine as claimed in Claims 1 or 2, 80 wherein the gamble feature is subsidiary to a regular feature and is offered at random.

4. A machine as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein the gamble feature is offered as a result of a win on another feature of the machine.

5. A machine as claimed in any preceding claim, wherein the alternatives are presented on a video screen.

6. A machine as claimed in Claim 5, 85 wherein the alternatives are representations of playing cards.

7. A machine as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the gamble is on the colour of the selected card.

8. A machine as claimed in Claim 6 or 7, 90 wherein when successful gambles produce a corresponding number of cards on the screen, and when those cards are in certain combinations, a prize is awarded independently of any gambling prize.

Printed in the United Kingdom for
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Dd 8818935, 1986, 4235.
Published at The Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings,
London, WC2A 1AY, from which copies may be obtained.